

## Reproducing the nation: 'banal nationalism' in the Turkish press

Arus Yumul

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, ISTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY

Umut Özkırmılı

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, ISTANBUL BILGI UNIVERSITY

### Introduction

Can we pretend that nationalism is just another manifestation of the atavistic forces of blood and passion, awakening from its presumed latency and making itself felt after years of repression? Can we confine nationalism to outbursts of aggression and irrationality pitting so many people around the world – especially in the so-called periphery – against each other? If yes, then, what about 'our' nationalism? If we see nationalism 'as the force which creates nation-states or which threatens the stability of existing states', then 'what happens to nationalism once the nation-state is established' (Billig, 1995: 43–4)? Can we, on the other hand, ascribe the resilience of nationalism in the developed and relatively stable parts of the world to the quest for identity and meaning in a bewilderingly complex world characterized by unqualified modernization?

Michael Billig, in his groundbreaking study *Banal Nationalism* (1995), challenges the orthodox conceptualizations of nationalism which tend to focus only on its extreme manifestations and project it on to 'others', thereby ignoring, even theoretically denying, 'our' nationalism. Such accounts, he contends, while depicting 'their' nationalism as oppressive, violent or racist, describe 'our' nationalist feelings as 'patriotism', thus as something beneficial. He is critical of interpretations that treat nationalism as a phenomenon that emerges only under certain 'extraordinary' conditions or

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specific historical circumstances, suddenly disappearing once normal conditions are restored. For Billig, 'nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition' (1995: 6). On the other hand, by virtue of accounts that depict nationalist sentiments as universal psychological states catering to the human need for identity and belonging, nationalism is naturalized. It not only 'ceases to be nationalism', but also 'ceases to be a problem for investigation' (1995: 17).

The central thesis of Billig's study is that in the established nations there is a constant flagging of nationhood. He introduces the term 'banal nationalism' to cover all those unnoticed, routine practices, ideological habits, beliefs and representations which make the daily reproduction of nations in the established states of the West possible. 'The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is a flag hanging unnoticed on the public building' (1995: 8).

To illustrate his argument, Billig conducts a survey of British daily newspapers on a randomly selected day. His findings are significant: British papers constantly flag nationhood. This in itself is not that surprising. The role of newspapers in the daily reproduction of nationhood has already been acknowledged by many scholars, perhaps the most celebrated being Benedict Anderson (1991). But newspapers flag nationhood in more than one way. For instance, the structure in which they present their news takes the existence of a world composed of different nations as granted. Furthermore, by employing a complex deixis of 'here', and 'we', they present 'the national homeland as the home of the readers' (Billig, 1995: 11).

Replicating Billig's analysis in another context, we conducted a survey of Turkish newspapers on a randomly selected day. The inspiration for this study came from Billig himself:

If nationalism is banally inhabited, then such flaggings should be continually made in the media. . . . To demonstrate this systematically, it would be necessary to sample the various forms of mass media and mass culture over a lengthy period in a number of countries. (Billig, 1995: 109)

We are fully aware that this study does not involve a particular theoretical contribution to the literature on nationalism. However, we do also believe that in a time where the availability of a general theory to explain the various manifestations of such a protean phenomenon as nationalism is seriously questioned (Hall, 1993; Smith, 1996a), and where the debate on nationalism has already reached an impasse with an array of general theories offset by myriads of case studies (Halliday, 1997), the value of studies which try to apply a particular theoretical perspective to a specific case with the aim of critically evaluating its validity will not be negligible.

### Analysis of results

A survey of 38 Turkish daily newspapers on a randomly selected day, 16 January 1997, was conducted.<sup>1</sup> This was an ordinary day in the sense that it was not an official day of celebration, commemoration, electoral campaigning or a time of extraordinary national crisis. The selection of an ordinary day is important since it enables us to see to what extent and in what forms nationhood is flagged or reminded daily by the media even when there is no major crisis. However, as Billig notes, 'no times – indeed no places – can be called wholly ordinary' (1995: 110). Indeed, questions of 'nation' and 'national identity' have been particularly predominant in Turkish political discourse in the last two decades – under the impact of the Kurdish and pan-Islamist movements. Moreover, nearly a week before the day of the survey, a crisis was precipitated by the news that the Greek Cypriots were to buy missiles from Russia, which was perceived as a threat not only to Turkish Cypriots but to Turkey as well.

In the course of the survey, the presentation and content of the news were analysed, the editorials and articles of columnists and the advertisements were explored. Several quantitative indicators of 'banal nationalism' – which were lacking in Billig's survey – were also included in the analysis.

Politicians are also important in the continual reproduction of nations and national identity. As Harris argues, 'nationalism provides the framework and language for almost all political discussion' (Harris, 1990: 269, quoted in Billig, 1995: 99). Politicians address the whole nation as their audience and by using a complex deixis of homeland, they make the national homeland appear as 'the' context (Billig, 1995: 109). Hence, when discussing the results of the survey, references to the rhetoric of politicians will be made regularly to underline their role in homeland-making.

At first glance, it is possible to discern the most conspicuous symbols of 'banal nationalism'. Approximately one third (13 out of 38) of the newspapers examined use in their logos either the Turkish flag or a map of Turkey and/or slogans that directly or indirectly remind us of our homeland and national identity. Whereas some of the slogans, such as 'Turkey for the Turks' (*Hürriyet*) and 'The newspaper of those who love their country' (*Akşam*) carry overt nationalist tones, others such as 'The best newspaper of Turkey' (*Sabah*) or 'The new newspaper of new Turkey' (*Günyüzdün*) evoke the nation in more subtle ways. In fact, the very brand names of several papers are constant reminders of our nationhood, national ideals and 'our' place in the world: 'Turkey' (*Türkiye*); 'Nationality' (*Milliyet*); 'Freedom' (*Hürriyet*); 'The Republic' (*Cumhuriyet*); 'Turkish Daily News'; 'The National Newspaper' (*Millî Gazete*); 'Middle East' (*OrtaDoğu*); and 'New Asia' (*Yeni Asya*).

All these 'unimaginative repetitions' serve as continuous, albeit barely conscious, reminders of our nationhood. Through a process of routine-formation, remembering occurs without conscious awareness. This process might be called enhabitation: 'thoughts, reactions and symbols become turned into routine habits and, thus, they become enhabited' (Billig, 1995: 42). Once enhabited as such, they turn into unwaved flags, unthinkfully reminding us of our national identity and homeland.

The newspapers contribute to this process of routine-formation in more than one way. The organization of the papers and the presentation of the news can be observed to illustrate this argument. On the day of the survey, 29 of the 38 newspapers under scrutiny (approximately 76 percent of them) separated foreign from domestic news. Whereas those news items which do not belong to 'us' are presented under such signposts as 'The World', 'The World Tour' and 'Foreign News', domestic news items are classified under subject headings and do not carry a specific caption like 'Home News' as if, unless otherwise stated, all news is domestic news.

Similarly, the weather sections of the papers routinely report national and foreign weather separately under different headings. Very much in line with Billig's observation (1995: 116-17), the papers generally use a map of Turkey in reporting the weather. However, they do not label it Turkey, presuming the shape of the national geography to be familiar to, thus easily identifiable by, the readers. This way of presenting the weather serves to reinforce and naturalize at the level of the unconscious the geographical shape of the homeland which the reader has encountered countless times in the course of his lifetime.

By organizing their structure along national lines, the newspapers duplicate the division of the world into 'home' and 'foreign' - hence, into 'us' and 'them' - and remind us that 'we' belong to 'our' homeland (Billig, 1995: 115). In turn, 'we', the readers, being at the same time citizens of the nation-state, accept this division as natural and feel at home when we read about events taking place within national boundaries. At most, we cast an eye over 'their' news and without wasting much time at foreign soils, we turn to 'our' familiar homeland territory.

The deixis of homeland-making is accompanied by poetic representations of our country.<sup>2</sup> Our homeland territory is not an ordinary piece of land; it is an extraordinary place watered with the blood of those who had fought and died for it (*Yeni Şafak*), 'the most beautiful geographic land' (Yıldız), 'the cradle of civilizations' (Özışık), full of historic monuments (*Son Çağır*). Such and similar representations of 'our' country, by transforming the piece of land into a homeland, lead to an intensification of our attachments, which in turn makes us ready to die for it.

It goes without saying that in the Turkish press, the proportion of national news items far exceeds the international ones (see Table 1). This

TABLE 1  
The proportion of national and international news

	Domestic	%	International	%	Total
Total news	2533	82	563	18	3096
Columns	282	91	28	9	310
Sports news	438	79	119	21	557
Sports columns	32	97	1	3	33

tendency is easily seen when the front pages of the papers are scanned. The overall ratio of international news in the front pages of the newspapers remains around 26 percent, with 13 out of 38 papers reserving the whole front page for national news.

At this stage, it should be noted that most of the international news situated on the front pages of the newspapers was either directly related to Turkey or presented in such a way as to attach particular prominence to its implications for Turkey. Moreover, a substantial part of the world news concerned the Cyprus issue. Consequently, 'pure' international news, such as the Hebron Agreement signed between the Israelis and the Palestinians, were trivial both in terms of quantity and of space allocated to them.

The same pattern repeats itself on other pages. Hence, 82 percent of the total number of news items were domestic news. In fact, considering that another 3 percent consisted of international news which was somehow related to Turkey, we see that only 15 percent of all news items presented in the papers on 16 January 1997 were reserved for international events.

The gap in question widens when columns and editorials are similarly classified. The proportion of columns reviewing international events remains at 9 percent. Again, when we exclude columns dealing with the Cyprus issue or developments concerning Turkey, this proportion is reduced to 3 percent. Finally, the sports pages display the same tendency with 79 percent of all news and 97 percent of all columns devoted to domestic events.

The aim of presenting these figures is not solely to demonstrate the gross imbalances between the ratios of domestic and foreign news in the Turkish press. Stating this would be no more than a truism. What needs to be emphasized, however, is the way in which this state of affairs is taken to be 'natural' by the readers.

The flagging of nationhood is not only accomplished through the structures of the newspapers or the predominance of national stories over international ones; it is also achieved by 'simultaneously speaking to and for the nation', by evoking a national 'we', by addressing 'us', the nation, and by making it the epicentre of the universe (Billig, 1995: 114-15). This

attitude can even be observed in the advertisements. Hence, the ad for Hilton on the day of the survey which coincided with the month of Ramadan read: 'Join us in the celebration of Ramadan' (*Turkish Daily News*). The 'join us' part of the ad is a typical deixis of homeland and nation-making: 'join' is addressing the Turkish nation; 'us', by evoking a national 'we', is emphasizing our unity and 'Ramadan' by connoting Islam, 'our shared religion', is further reinforcing our feelings of commonality. Celebrations, on the other hand, are well-known means of strengthening national identity and solidarity.

On the day of the survey, all papers carried stories whose headlines openly communicated 'Turkishness' on their front pages: 'The tragedy of the Turkish girl' (*Günaydın*); 'The historical dresses of the Turkish women' (*Son Çağrı*); 'Turkey is being evaluated' (*Emek*); 'A new treachery against Turkey' (*Son Havadis*); 'We believe in Turkey' (*Türkiye*); 'Turkey is becoming a centre of attraction' (*Yeni Yüzyıl*); 'Turkey is important for financial institutions' (*Finansal Forum*); 'A Turkish motel in America' (*Takvim*), 'Belgium puts embargo on missiles to Turkey' (*Hergün*).

Whereas the headlines quoted above openly flagged nationhood by mentioning the country's name and 'our' national identity, others accomplished this in a more subtle way. In fact, there is no need for such explicitness. When we read headlines such as 'Citizens do not know how to use natural gas' (*Gözcü*) or 'External debt is 78 billion dollars' (*Milliyet*), 'we', the readers and citizens of the Turkish Republic, without looking for any other specifications understand beyond doubt that the mentioned citizens are the citizens of Turkey, and the indicated debt is the debt of the Turkish state. Since we have inhabited our nationhood through a continual process of routine-formation, 'we', the readers, usually take it for granted that a story is about 'our' homeland or 'our' nation unless otherwise stated in the headline or the first lines. This is because the media presents a 'consensual model' of society which 'requires the notion of unity: one nation, one people, one society, often simply translated into ours – our industry, our economy, our nuclear deterrent, police force, balance of payments, etc.' (Hartley, 1993: 82).

We will now turn in more detail to some of the themes which have a higher priority on the Turkish political agenda – and derivatively in the press – and see to what extent these various debates are framed in nationalist terms and flag nationhood. However, before embarking on such an analysis two further points need to be made. First, the analysis of the various ways in which nationhood is flagged in the newspapers should not ignore the distinction between overt/fervent and covert/banal forms of flagging. Hence, this distinction will be made explicit where necessary. Second, the ideological affiliations of the newspapers examined should be specified for the sake of the clarity of the argument (see Table 2).<sup>3</sup>

TABLE 2  
Ideological affiliations of the newspapers

Ideological affiliations	Newspapers
Liberal	<i>Yeni Yüzyıl</i> , <i>Turkish Daily News</i> , <i>Hürnes</i> , <i>Global</i> , <i>Ateş</i> , <i>Bizim Gazete</i> , <i>Posta</i>
Centre right	<i>Günaydın</i> , <i>Hürriyet</i> , <i>Pazar Postası</i> , <i>Milliyet</i> , <i>Sabah</i> , <i>Son Havadis</i> , <i>Takvim</i> , <i>Tan</i>
Centre left	<i>Cumhuriyet</i> , <i>Radikal</i>
Extreme nationalist right	<i>Hergün</i> , <i>Son Çağrı</i> , <i>Ortadoğu</i> , <i>Akşam</i>
Extreme Islamist right	<i>Yeni Asya</i> , <i>Akit</i> , <i>Selam</i> , <i>Milli Gazete</i>
Extreme left	<i>Demokrasi</i> , <i>Emek</i>
Moderate Islam	<i>Yeni Şafak</i> , <i>Zaman</i> , <i>Türkiye</i>
Liberal financial	<i>Dünya</i> , <i>Finansal Forum</i>
Tabloids	<i>Bugün</i> , <i>Gözcü</i> , <i>Ekip</i>
Sports	<i>Fanatik</i> , <i>Fotomaç</i> , <i>Spor</i>

### Religion

It was only natural to encounter the reflections of the conflict between Islamists and secularists, perhaps the most pressing social fracture line in Turkey, in the course of our journey through the newspapers. What deserves particular attention here is the fact that the discourses of both the secularists and Islamists are couched in overtly nationalist terms, which means that most of the examples cited in this section flag nationhood in quite noticeable ways. Hence, columnists of the Islamist newspapers assert that 'the times of conducting politics by waging war against the nation and its beliefs are over' (Ceylan; emphasis added), that although in the person of the then Prime Minister Erbakan (the leader of the now extinct pro-Islamic Welfare Party) Turkey was presented the opportunity to attain the place it deserved in the world of nations, it was futile to expect any support from those circles who blindly praised the West and disregarded both the 'high interests of the state' and the 'national and moral values of the Turkish people' (Şirin).

The secularists, on the other hand, warn the readers that the aim of the Islamists is to demolish the state established by Atatürk (Arcaayürek), that since its proclamation, the internal and external enemies of the secular republic, in treason and treachery, have turned a blind eye to bigotry and fanaticism for their own petty political interests (Işık).

Although they emphasize different aspects of the problem, both sides present their arguments overtly within the framework of nationalist rhetoric. Whereas the Islamists emphasize the beliefs and moral values of the Turkish nation, the secularists stress the secular premises of the Turkish Republic and the constitutional order of the state.

By way of concluding this section let us quote another Islamist columnist who, after criticizing the official secular policy of the state, asks:

What have been the benefits of the secular policies that have been in practice for longer than half a century? Were the fanatical secularists able to win a Nobel prize? Were they able to establish a national-local automotive industry like South Korea? (Eygi, a)

Here the author, while using the elements of nationalist discourse, is at the same time taking the achievements of a foreign country and a highly prestigious international award as the criteria of development and success respectively. This can be considered natural since nationalism is simultaneously an inward- and outward-looking ideology (Billig, 1995: 10).

### Cyprus

The perception of an external threat is perhaps the most influential factor in mobilizing nationalist sentiments. On the day of the survey, nationhood was flagged most conspicuously in the news concerning the 'missile crisis'. As noted before, the decision of the Greek Cypriots to buy missiles from Russia was interpreted as a threat to national security, for the missiles were reportedly 'capable of downing Turkish jets over Turkey' (*Turkish Daily News*). Most papers reported (some from the headlines) the remarks of prominent politicians on the issue: 'Turkey is facing a new trap' (Bülent Ecevit, the leader of the Democratic Left Party), 'The real target is Turkey' (Rıza Ulucak, Deputy Chairman of the now extinct Welfare Party).

Although there was a general consensus among the newspapers to the effect that the belligerent side was the Greeks as usual, the opinions as to how Turkey should respond to the crisis diverged. Whereas some columnists argued that displaying strong reactions might harm our 'national interest' (Tarkan) and that uttering war threats might portray Turkey as a pugnacious country in the eyes of the world (Atasoy), others insisted that Turkey should stand firm against those seeking to violate its rights and warned the authorities that if Turkey were not to take the necessary precautions 'Cyprus will slip from our hands' (Niyazi).

Europe also took its share of the accusations. Defending the view that Europe was taking sides on the Cyprus question, it was declared that 'Those who think that the crusader mentality is dead are mistaken. Its spectre not only re-emerges in Athens but also in Belgium' (Yalçintas).

News about the West holding the Greeks responsible for the escalation of the crisis had also found their way into the papers. The most striking example came from the daily *Bugün*, which reported the *Daily Telegraph's* assessment of the decision of the Greeks to buy missiles as unwise with the following heading: 'Silly Greeks'.

### Internal-external enemies

By identifying 'our' enemies both within and without, the press produces a dichotomous – and mutually exclusive – vision of 'us' and 'them'. We are alerted about the stealthy plans of imperialist countries against Turkey (Siddikoglu) and presented as a nation wronged by others, suffering numerous injustices: 'A new treachery against Turkey' (*Son Havadis*), 'Another blow from Germany' (*Hürses*). The first comment comes from the columnist of an extreme nationalist newspaper and the other two from centre right and liberal dailies respectively.

When reading these and similar news/commentaries, our belief in the validity of the common saying 'the Turk has no friend but the Turk' is reinforced. We feel the need to embrace our national identity more strongly and seek to minimize the impact of external threats by resorting to national isolation.

The press also warns 'us' against internal enemies, traitors and collaborators who are engaged in activities that might endanger our national unity. The internal enemies identified by the newspapers vary: sometimes it is the media, sometimes the intellectuals, the fundamentalists or human rights advocates; at other times politicians, officials and so on. For instance, it has been asserted that some journalists were reporting to Europe against Turkey (Aksun), that private television channels, for the sake of increasing their ratings, were making programmes with all those who criticize Turkey (Ataklı) and that the politicians were unable to place the interests of the nation over and above their petty political or personal interests (letter sent to the parliament by businessmen chambers of Denizli, *Diinya*).

Another striking example comes from the then Deputy Prime Minister Tansu Çiller attacking the main opposition leader who had appeared on a television programme with an Italian prosecutor to compare the corruption scandals in Turkey and Italy:

You appear on TV with your politician identity and complain about your own state and country, as if you were an indigenous official interrogated by a colonial inspector. You act in such a way without realizing that you are harming the honour of Turkey. (*Sabah*)

Whereas the notion of the consensus – a basic organizing principle of the media (Hartley, 1993: 82) – 'denies any major structural discrepancies between different groups, or between different maps of meaning in a society' (Hall et al., 1978: 55), the media also mentions groups and individuals that fall outside this assumed consensus. Such groups, however, are portrayed as deviants and their behaviour is disapproved of and delegitimized by such terms as irresponsibility, irrationality, mindlessness, unpatriotism and so on (Hartley, 1993: 84).

At the end of the day, despite the presentation of dissent in society, it is the consensual view that gains prominence. 'Consensus assumes, and in times of crisis actually affirms, that within the group, there is no difference or disunity in the interests and values of any of the population' (Fowler, 1991: 49). In the words of a politician, the Turkish nation 'always acts unanimously and supports the government on national matters' (Rıza Uluçak).

### Cultural distinctiveness

Culture has always been a central element in nationalist ideologies. Nationalists evoke a sense of cultural distinctiveness and unity, accompanied by a call for cultural purification (Smith, 1996b: 449-51). An example comes from a columnist of an overtly nationalist newspaper:

If we do not want our children to become familiar with Father Christmas, we should produce cartoons of El-Khidir.<sup>4</sup> If we are against arabesque and pop music, let's listen to Turkish folk songs. If we are not happy with discos, drugs and eroticism, let us build kiosques and cultural centres where the Turkish culture might flourish. (Küçükylidiz)

A consciousness of cultural distinctiveness is also nurtured by emphasizing the differences between 'our people' and 'outsiders'. Concerning a town project to be undertaken by the French, it is asserted that 'Turkish people, Muslim people will reside here: a Frenchman cannot construct a residential centre which can cater to the needs of Turkish people' (*Akit*). Here, not only are we placed into a national category, but also presented with the idea that we are a *sui generis* people with our own particular way of life. This latter idea is critical for all nationalist ideologies, for the conception of 'Culture as a specific way of life - manifested in things like language, religion and tradition - gives tangible support to the idea that discrete groups of people are a fundamental condition of humanity'. This essentialist argument, in turn, 'leads to the reification of the concept of nation and its derivatory ideology, nationalism' (Penrose, 1995: 399).

In passing, let us note that this advocacy for national particularism is accompanied by an appeal to universalism: 'I foresee a Turkey whose people have assimilated to democracy in the Western sense' (Garib). Another columnist regrets that the Turkish nationalists had for so long discarded universal literature, art and culture, that their frame of mind had been shaped by narrow racist ideas instead of universal matrixes (Bayraktaröglü). Such moments of contradiction, however, are characteristic of nationalist thought (and its reflections in the media) since nationalist utterances comprise both universal and particularistic elements (Billig, 1995: 87).

The corollary of the sense of cultural distinctiveness is the belief that as a nation we possess peculiar characteristics which are almost genetically determined. This moves us one step further, into the realm of sociobiology. According to a prominent politician, for example, 'the Turks are an industrious and intelligent people' (Cavit Çağlar, independent MP, *Yeni Yüzyıl*). Our identity is unique, superior and exclusive. Moreover, we are a nation that 'has been praised by the Prophet of the prophets' (Yıldız). That is, we are not only a nation endowed with extraordinary qualities, but at the same time we are a chosen people with sacred qualities - an idea leading to ethnocentrism and exclusiveness (Smith, 1992). This positive evaluation of the national self is accompanied by open or hidden messages of the inferiority of others.

Various scholars have stressed the importance of the 'other' in constructing the self and in sustaining and reinforcing group identities. National groups, too, tend to define themselves not solely with reference to their own characteristics, but more significantly by comparing themselves to other such groups and by differentiating between 'us' and 'them'. In the process they implicitly or explicitly favour in-group individuals and values while derogating out-group ones (Tajfel and Turner, 1986).

The ex-Prime Minister Erbakan's words constitute a striking example of this tendency. While addressing foreign students studying in Turkey, he states that 'the people of Turkey embrace [others] with sincere affection. If [in the future] you are asked what you have learned in Turkey, tell them that you have learned to value righteousness' (*Milli Gazete*). Erbakan, by drawing a sharp contrast between Turkish and American values and asserting the moral superiority of the Turkish people over Americans continues: 'If you were to study in the United States, you would have learned to value power, instead of righteousness' (*Milli Gazete*). He also attributes a universal mission to Turkey: 'Let more students come to Turkey, learn to value righteousness and spread it throughout the world, offering this principle to the service of humanity'. By making a universal moral claim, he depicts some kind of unity between our values and universal morality (Billig, 1995: 90). This international predilection 'is integral to the modern consciousness of nationalism' (1995: 86).

### Past, present and future

An idealization and glorification of the past, coupled with a nostalgic longing for a golden age, are important elements of the nationalist discourse, since its presumed greatness, virtue and splendour provide focal points of comparison with the present and 'act as stimuli and models for national self-revival' (Smith, 1986: 200).

Turkey still carries vivid memories of an imperial past. Obviously, this reservoir of memories reflects itself in the Turkish press. Our present is compared with our glorious past, resulting in a simultaneous evocation of our senses of pride and resentment. A columnist referring to the memoirs of Pedro, a Spanish prisoner of war in the Ottoman court, reminds us that four centuries ago the Turkish armada had been sailing in distant parts of the Mediterranean and winning important victories (Eygü, b). Such and similar articles present our past as something that we should take lessons from. The then Prime Minister, on the other hand, contends that the West owes much to the Islamic world, since it was through the contribution of Islamic scholars that the sciences, which are at the service of humanity, had developed. Moreover, 'these sciences reached their zenith at the hands of the Ottomans' (*Milli Gazete*).

However, taking pride in our glorious past is not by itself adequate. It has to be complemented by expectations about the future. There is a belief that despite all the crises and setbacks we suffer, the future of Turkey and the Turkish nation is bright: 'The good days are on the horizon' (Pulak). This future is sometimes presented as a return to a mythical golden age: 'The great Turkish nation is marching towards its old golden days' (Türkeş, late leader of the nationalist party *Hergün*).

While our past is exalted and our future is shown to be bright, ideas and representations about our present situation are the most ambivalent. On the one hand, there is a group of columnists who picture Turkey in a sea of troubles: 'Pity, Turkey is being continuously dragged into the league of the miserable countries' (Sazak). Time and again it is reiterated that Turkey and the Turks do not deserve these discouraging conditions, that the responsibility for this state of affairs lies with politicians. Such comments evoke an implicit sense of shame, which is an important constitutive element of the nationalist discourse. If 'we' fail the past, 'we' would be shamed (Scheff, 1995, cited in Billig, 1995: 101). However we, the Turkish people, are capable of recovering: 'I am convinced that with some extra effort the Turkish people will achieve these goals' (Garib).

### Our prestige

The media is preoccupied with the international prestige of Turkey, its standing vis-a-vis other countries. That the credit rating of an Indian company was higher than that of Turkey was reported under the heading: 'The Indian company surpassed Turkey' (*Pazar Postası*). Another paper declared that the scenes witnessed during the distribution of aid in Diyarbakır were reminiscent of Africa (*Milliyet*). 'Yet another shameful month for Turkey' (*Demokrasi*) was the headline of the news on the publication of the monthly human rights report. A feeling of resentment

and dismay is evoked among the readers by such news when they realize that their country is not comparing favourably even with underdeveloped countries.

On the other hand, news about our international achievements is presented with great enthusiasm, and the members of other nations find a place in the newspapers as admirers of Turkey and the Turks. Nearly all papers ran stories about the 15-year-old student who had managed to take one point from the former world chess champion Anatoli Karpov, playing simultaneously against 20 finalists in a chess tournament. The headlines read: 'The Turkish boy crushed the world champion' (*Gözcü*); 'The magnificent Turk beats Karpov' (*Takvim*). The news about a Turkish Cypriot man who appeared on the cover of the *Sun*'s woman section was reported by the following headlines: 'Osman, the favourite of English girls' (*Sabah*), 'Osman, the Turkish delight . . .' (*Hürriyet*).

The newspapers report that, in the opinion of a Swedish model, Bodrum was a magnificent place, much better than Saint-Tropez (*Gözcü*), that Turkey was the favourite of gold-mining companies (*Demokrasi*), that the decision to privatize the facilities established on the river Manavgat for the purpose of selling water 'makes the mouth of Israel water' (*Selam*), that at the Turkish schools in Central Asia the Turkish National Anthem was being sung by people of different religions (*Zaman*). This news, by flattering our national pride, nourishes and buttresses our nationalist feelings.

### Economy

Economic news is also presented within the parameters of nationalist discourse. A recurrent theme consists of recommendations about courses of action to be taken in order to improve the Turkish economy and protect Turkey's economic interests: 'Turkey is losing its position as an alternative for foreign trade. We are about to miss the Eurasian train' (*Cumhuriyet*).

Even the language used in the presentation of the news concerning the then pending arrival of the credit rating institution Duff and Phelps flags our nationhood: 'Duff and Phelps is coming for an oral examination' (*Yeni Yüzyıl*), 'American graders are coming' (*Yeni Şafak*). The socialist *Emek* reports the same news with the following headline: 'Turkey is being evaluated'. It reads: 'The institutions by which the imperialists control the economies of the dependent countries have taken Turkey under close supervision'. The way this news is presented by the press conveys a sense that 'our' country, 'our' economy is going to be assessed by 'foreigners', by institutions of imperialist countries whose decision will affect our future. Not only do we resent this fact, but also our national pride is injured, since we realize that our country is one of the dependent countries.

As Roger Fowler notes, 'There are always different ways of saying the same thing, and they are not random accidental alternatives. Differences in expression carry ideological distinctions' (1991: 4).

On the other hand, papers also quote the words of politicians who claim that the Turkish economy is in fact in good shape, that the credit institutions, far from being independent, are agents of certain interest groups and that their grades do not objectively reflect the real situation of the Turkish economy. In fact, one should feel apprehensive about the economy if those institutions were to raise the grade of the country (Yalim Erez, the then Minister of Industry and Trade, *Hürriyet*). Such news, by relieving our anxiety and embarrassment, restores our confidence in our economy and our achievements as a nation.

### Sports

Several scholars have called attention to the relationship between sports and national identity. It has been noted that sport, because of its universality, 'has been an important cultural arena through which collective identities have been articulated' (Blain et al., 1993: 12). As is the case in many other countries, sports games are presented with a military metaphor and international games are perceived as 'substitute wars' (Blain et al., 1993: 77). Hence, sports news flags nationhood quite openly. Nearly all papers ran stories about the victory of Turkish basketball teams in the European Clubs' Cup. The headlines read: 'Nobody can bend the wrist of Efes. It knocked down Croatian Insurance' (*Milliyet*), 'Our conqueror of Europe wrote another epic' (*Günaydın*). Time and again, the newspapers repeated that Croatia Insurance was a strong team, thus making it clear that our victory was not an ordinary one: 'Our representative in the European league defeated the strong representative of Croatia' (*Hürriyet*). By presenting the Turkish teams as 'our' teams, the press establishes the communal identification of those teams with the nation. In a similar vein, the teams of other nations are identified with their respective countries: 'Netaş surpassed the Greeks' (*Spor*), 'Ulker's Spanish campaign' (*Hürriyet*). This style of presenting the nations rather than the teams as main actors emphasizes the national dimension of the games.

The headlines quoted above are illustrations of open flaggings of nationhood. However, examples of more banal flaggings were also present in the papers. For instance, *Fanatik*, after reporting the victory of the 14-16 age-group team of Galatasaray over the Dutch Ajax quotes the managers of Galatasaray: 'Let them learn from us, instead of us taking them as examples'.

Zeki Çol, in his article containing hopes and dreams about Turkish football, asks ironically: 'Would we be committing a sin if we raised the

standards of our football to such a level that it challenged the world?' (*Milliyet*). Similarly, another journalist expressed his aspirations for the Turkish football league with the following words:

Let Turkey have such a league that the whole world admires. Let people from all parts of the world come to watch our games. How nice it would be if all the people of the world came here and praised our football, the gentlemanly conduct of our players and spectators. (Kapucuoğlu)

### Conclusion

As Billig notes, 'Nationalism is simultaneously obvious and obscure' (1995: 14). 'Banal nationalism' refers to all those familiar, unnoticed, taken-for-granted forms of nationalism embedded in the routines of social life that serve as constant reminders of nationhood. The continual flagging of nationhood is accomplished in myriad ways. The media perhaps plays the most remarkable part in the daily reproduction of nationhood. It does so by using a deixis of homeland and nation-making, by flagging banal signs of nationhood, by quoting the nationalist utterances of politicians and others. These messages do not always carry overt nationalist tones: 'Was there a scarcity of men in Turkey that she chose a Greek lover?' (Savaşlar). Those messages that implicitly nurture and praise our national identity are as effective as those flagging it openly and passionately.

As the foregoing pages illustrate, the discourse used by the Turkish press is crammed with the constituent elements of the nationalist ideology. According to Smith the central propositions of this ideology are:

1. The world is divided into nations, each with its own individuality, history and destiny.
2. The nation is the source of all political and social power, and loyalty to the nation overrides all other allegiances.
3. Human beings must identify with a nation if they want to be free to realize themselves.
4. Nations must be free and secure if peace and justice are to prevail in the world. (Smith, 1991: 74)

The Turkish press does not question the naturalness of the above propositions. Quite the contrary, it takes them for granted, presenting departures from these general rules as anomalies. For instance, referring to the ex-Prime Minister who was presumed to hold American citizenship alongside Turkish citizenship, one columnist wrote disapprovingly: 'Our first . . . Prime Minister with double passports' (Güçlü). It should also be noted that the newspapers advocating and propagating different world views appeal to different audiences. Hence, their messages generally contain divergent, at

times openly antagonistic, opinions. However, all these opposing views, as the secularist-Islamist conflict and the universalist-particularist debate reveal, are presented within the framework of nationalist discourse. Nationalism, like all other ideologies, contains contradictory themes and propositions. The debate, however, is conducted within parameters that take nationhood for granted as the natural context of the universe. In this sense, the argument is conducted within and not against nationalism' (Billig, 1995: 87).

Given Billig's observation that social scientists are also responsible for instilling banal nationalism, a word of caution is in order before concluding this study. Craig Calhoun (1993: 214) enunciates this succinctly:

... many of the categories and presumptions of this discourse are so deeply ingrained in our everyday language and our academic theories that it is virtually impossible to shed them, and we can only remind ourselves continuously to take them into account.

In this context, this study is not an exception. More importantly however, another, rather all-embracing question should be raised: what is the alternative? Nationalism being an eponymous word after which our contemporary common sense has been shaped, how can we escape its main tenets? By resorting to internationalism? But how can we do so given that 'nationalism and internationalism are the two sides of the same coin' (Periwal, 1995: 230)? It seems that until an alternative mode of political organization that might replace the 'nation' is invented, nationalism and its intriguing partner 'banal nationalism' will continue to be the order of the day.

#### Notes

1. The 38 newspapers included in the survey are: *Son Havadis*, *Bugün*, *Radikal*, *Sabah*, *Hürriyet*, *Ekip*, *Son Çağrı*, *Fotomaç*, *Spor*, *Yeni Asya*, *Hergün*, *Global*, *Zaman*, *Finansal Forum*, *Demokrasi*, *Emek*, *Takvim*, *Milliyet*, *Tan*, *Oriadoğu*, *Selam*, *Bicim Gazete*, *Gözcü*, *Türkiye*, *Milli Gazete*, *Günaydın*, *Yeni Şafak*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Akit*, *Ateş*, *Fanatik*, *Yeni Yüzyıl*, *Hürses*, *Dünya*, *Pazar Postası*, *Akşam*, *Posta*, *Turkish Daily News*.
2. For the poetic representations of territory and its uses by the nationalists see Smith (1986: 183–90).
3. Obviously, these are broad generalizations. There are minor ideological differences among the newspapers cited in any one category.
4. 'El-Khudir' is a folk saint strongly identified with the Turkish nation.

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**Arus Yumul** is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Istanbul Bilgi University. Her research interests include ethnicity, nationalism and minorities, among others. She has published numerous articles on ethnicity and minorities.

**Address:** Department of Sociology, Istanbul Bilgi University, İnönü cad. No. 28, Kuştepe 80310, Şişli-Istanbul, Turkey.  
 [email arus@bilgi.edu.tr]

**Unut Özkırımlı** is Assistant Professor of International Relations at Istanbul Bilgi University. He is the author of *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (Macmillan, 2000). His research interests include theories of nationalism and ethnicity, and the reproduction of nationhood.  
**Address:** Department of International Relations, Istanbul Bilgi University, İnönü cad. No. 28, Kuştepe 80310, Şişli-Istanbul, Turkey.  
 [email: umuto@bilgi.edu.tr]

## Television production: issues of exploitation, commodification and subjectivity in UK television labour markets

Gillian Ursell

TRINITY & ALL SAINTS COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Much attention has been paid in recent decades to substantial changes in work and employment in Britain (Millward et al., 1992; Armstrong et al., 1993; Cully et al., 1998). Observers have identified such phenomena as a decline in the scope and role of collective bargaining and the derecognition of trades unions (Campling, 1991; Brown and Walsh, 1994); the augmentation of managerial prerogatives, and increasing employer use of individualized or non-standard contracts (Campbell and Daly, 1992; Evans and Hudson, 1994), and a general intensification of work via increased labour 'flexibility' (Legge, 1998). The trend is taken broadly to reflect a weakening of the powers of organized and individual labour vis-a-vis employers and, related, more difficult conditions for the earning of livelihoods.

These changes are as evident in television production as in many other sectors (Ursell, 1997, 1998a). The particular details and outcomes are considered more fully below but, in brief, the size of permanent staffs with terrestrial producer-broadcasters has diminished, casualization of the labour force has increased, entry to the industry is more difficult and less well rewarded or supported, average earnings have dropped, and working terms and conditions have deteriorated.<sup>1</sup>

What to make of these changes? There is a tendency in much of the labour relations and labour process literature to treat the employment relation as a term automatically appropriate to describing the relationship between capital and labour, that is, as the sole mechanism through which labour and capital relate. An alternative theoretical construction is that the employment relation is better understood more precisely as that package of

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